

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claim 13 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter.

Please amend Claim 1 and add Claim 16, as indicated below.

1. (Currently Amended) A business method ~~for providing by which~~ a payer and an individual other than the payer are authorized for ~~with~~ access to digital medical image data generated by up to a plurality of imaging facilities, the business method comprising the steps of:

receiving digital medical image data generated by the imaging facilities using a gateway at each imaging facility;

transmitting the received digital medical image data from the gateway to a central server via a network and storing the digital medical image data at the central server;

providing the payer with access to the stored digital medical image data via an authorization process on the network for a fee; and

forwarding access to the stored digital medical image data to an individual other than the payer, wherein access is forwarded to the other individual by the payer and the other individual is thereafter ~~granted~~ provided with access to the stored digital medical image data via the authorization process on the network; and

notifying the other individual that access has been forwarded to him,
together with information on how to access it.

2. (Original) A business method according to Claim 1, wherein the digital medical image data is transmitted from the gateway to the central server using an authenticated session over a secure protocol.

3. (Original) A business method according to Claim 1, wherein the network is the Internet.

4. (Original) A business method according to Claim 1, wherein the central server is remote from both the imaging facilities and the payer.

5. (Original) A business method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of determining if the digital medical image data received by the gateway is associated with the payer,

wherein only digital medical image data determined to be associated with the payer is transmitted to the central server and stored.

6. (Original) A business method according to Claim 1, wherein the digital medical image data is received by the gateway using a DICOM protocol.

7. (Original) A business method according to Claim 1, wherein the digital medical image data is transmitted to the central server and stored in the same format as it was received by the gateway.

8. (Original) A business method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a report corresponding to digital medical image data generated by the imaging facilities and stored at the central server; and
storing the report at the central server,
wherein the payer is provided access to the report via the network for a fee.

9. (Original) A business method according to Claim 8, wherein the report is encrypted and transmitted to the central server via the network using an authenticated and secure communication session.

10. (Currently Amended) A business method according to Claim 8, further comprising the step of providing an interface for the payer to forward access for both of the stored digital medical image data and the corresponding reports to the other individual.

11. (Original) A business method according to Claim 8, further comprising the step of recording access to the stored digital medical image data and corresponding reports,

wherein access records are provided to the payer via the network for digital medical image data and corresponding reports associated with the payer.

12. (Original) A business method according to Claim 1, where access to the stored digital medical image data and corresponding reports is provided using a web-based viewer.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) A business method according to Claim 1, wherein the other individual is granted access for a limited time.

15. (Previously Presented) A business method according to Claim 1, wherein there are limitations on the power of the payer to forward access to other individuals.

Please add new Claim 16, as follows:

16. (New) A business method according to Claim 1, wherein the other individual is notified by e-mail.